

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 376

Providing the sense of the Senate that the Secretary of Commerce should declare a commercial fishery failure for the groundfish fishery for Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island and immediately propose regulations to implement section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 13, 2007

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. GREGG, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. REED, and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

RESOLUTION

Providing the sense of the Senate that the Secretary of Commerce should declare a commercial fishery failure for the groundfish fishery for Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island and immediately propose regulations to implement section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

Whereas the Secretary of Commerce may provide fishery disaster assistance under section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1861a(a)) if the Secretary determines that there is a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster as a result of natural causes, man-made causes

beyond the control of fishery managers to mitigate through conservation and management measures, including regulatory restrictions imposed to protect human health or the marine environment, or undetermined causes;

Whereas the Secretary of Commerce has not proposed or promulgated regulations to implement such section 312(a);

Whereas during 2007, the Governors of each of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the State of Maine, and the State of Rhode Island requested that the Secretary of Commerce declare a commercial fishery failure for the groundfish fishery under such section 312(a) and the Governor of the State of New Hampshire has indicated his intention of submitting a similar request;

Whereas since 1996, the Secretary of Commerce has had regulations in place that require significant restrictions and reductions on the catch and days-at-sea of New England fishermen in the groundfish fishery;

Whereas New England fishermen in the groundfish fishery have endured additional restrictions and reductions under Framework 42, which has resulted in many fishermen having just 24 days to fish during a season;

Whereas Framework 42 and other Federal fishing restrictions have had a great impact on small-boat fishermen, many of whom cannot safely fish beyond the inshore areas;

Whereas, as of the date of the enactment of this Act, each day-at-sea a fisherman spends in an inshore area reduces that fisherman's number of available days-at-sea by 2 days;

Whereas the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has provided information to the Secretary of Commerce demonstrating that between 1994 and 2006, overall conditions of groundfish stocks have not improved and that spawning stock biomass is near record lows for most major groundfish stocks;

Whereas the Commonwealth of Maine has provided additional information to the Secretary that between 2005 and 2006, total Massachusetts commercial groundfish vessel revenues (landings) decreased by 18 percent and there was a loss for related industries and communities estimated at \$22,000,000;

Whereas the State of Maine has provided information to the Secretary of Commerce indicating that since 1994, the impact of groundfish regulations have eliminated 50 percent of Maine's groundfish fleet, leaving just 110 active groundfish fishermen;

Whereas the State of Maine has provided additional information to the Secretary indicating that between 1996 and 2006, there was a 58 percent drop in groundfish landings in Maine and a 45 percent drop in groundfish revenue from approximately \$27,000,000 to \$15,000,000 and that between 2005 and 2006, groundfish revenues decreased 25 percent;

Whereas the State of Rhode Island has provided information to the Secretary of Commerce indicating that, since 1994, there has been a 66 percent drop in Rhode Island's groundfish fishery landings and, between 1995 and 2007, groundfish revenue decreased 20 percent from approximately \$7,500,000 to \$6,000,000;

Whereas the Secretary of Commerce rejected requests from Massachusetts, Maine, and Rhode Island to declare a commercial fishery failure prior to establishing any appropriate standard to implement section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; and

Whereas for centuries, growth in New England's commercial fishing industry has been intertwined with the history and economic growth of the New England States and has created thousands of jobs in both fishing and fishing-related industries for generations of New England residents: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that the
2 Secretary of Commerce should—

3 (1) reconsider the October 22, 2007 decision to
4 deny the requests of the Commonwealth of Massa-
5 chusetts, the State of Maine, and the State of Rhode
6 Island for a groundfish fishery failure declaration;

7 (2) look favorably upon the request of the State
8 of New Hampshire for a groundfish fishery failure
9 declaration; and

10 (3) immediately propose regulations to imple-
11 ment section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fish-
12 ery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C.
13 1861a(a)).

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